

Scott Spouses Newsletter

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Care Packages Freshen Dusty Days in Iraq

HARRISBURG, Ill. - Ask Amy Oxford how soldiers serving in Iraq keep the sand out of their noses, and she'll hold up a bottle of saline nasal spray. How they freshen desert-weary uniforms? She points to a bottle of Febreze fabric cleaner.

The items are among hundreds of drugstore goods destined for front-line troops in Iraq. They're stacked in boxes in an old brick house in the Southern Illinois town of Harrisburg, about 130 miles southeast of St. Louis. Oxford and her mother, Kathy Williams, have been sending custom care packages to U.S. soldiers in Iraq since the war began.

Generated by the e-mailed appeals of the soldiers and their families back home, the requests have soared over the past few months as the military extended deployments and, at the same time, limited the distribution of commissary items in an intensifying war zone.

Oxford and Williams keep a detailed file on each soldier they send items to, complete with clothing size, favorite snack and a list of friends who need things too. The requests - at 10 to 50 a day - outpace donations now.

But the two aren't deterred. "War is rough," said Oxford, 25, recently as she rummaged through waterless soap, lemonade mix, sun block, Big Red gum and other most-requested items distributed by their charity, *Southern Illinois Yellow Ribbon Campaign*.

"We're over here enjoying our free-

dom, so we ought to be willing to help by sending them stuff that reminds them of home," she said.

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service, the civilian agency that runs military stores, wants people to send soldiers gift certificates they can use at 54 stores in Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait rather than parcels that could clog mail delivery, said Judd Anstey, spokesman for the Dallas-based agency.

The Exchange Service used to send vehicles loaded with merchandise to troops in Iraq's more remote areas, but suspended the shipments in March after delivery became too dangerous, he said.

Now remote troops can get commissary merchandise by sending someone to fetch it, Anstey said.

But some soldiers say it's easier to open a posted package where they are than to spend time and effort getting their personal supplies.

Capt. William Miller of the 13th Coscom unit based at Fort Hood, Texas, goes on 14-hour patrols in heavy body armor, he wrote in an e-mail to The Associated Press. Baby wipes keep him and his troops cool between showers, he said. But getting to a store to buy them isn't easy.

"The PX is a 'luxury' that most soldiers do not get to enjoy in most areas,"

Miller wrote. "And of course, the sometimes hours waiting in line for a bar of soap makes it almost discouraging to even go in."

Oxford and Williams say donations slowed just as requests shot up. And their registration as a charity with the Illinois attorney general's office isn't enough to allow donors to deduct the gifts from their taxes. That means most companies say no, Oxford says.

She doesn't see a solution. "If we spent money to apply for (federal nonprofit status), we would have less to buy things for the soldiers," Oxford said. "And every one of these things means something to them."



By Susan Skiles Luke, The Associated Press, 05/17/2004—From the St. Louis Post-Dispatch website at <http://www.stltoday.com/stltoday/news/stories.nsf/News/Illinois+State+News/E917B86495C4EE3386256E980015C130?OpenDocument&Headline=Care+packages+freshen+dusty+days+in+Iraq&highlight=2%2CCare%2CPackages%2CFreshen%2CDusty%2CDays%2CIn%2CIraq>

To learn more about the Southern Illinois Yellow Ribbon Campaign visit their website at <http://www.siyellowribbon.com>, or visit their headquarters at 315 East Poplar Street on Route 13 in downtown Harrisburg, IL.

Servicemember's Civil Relief Act Protects Those Called to Duty

What happens if you are on Active Duty, or you're a Reservist/Guard member called to Active Duty, but you still have matters to attend to back home? What if you're overseas and can't make your credit card or mortgage payments? What if you have issues outstanding in a civil court?

On 19 December 2003, President Bush signed into law the Servicemember's Civil Relief Act (SCRA). This law updates and improves the World War II-era Soldiers and Sailors Civil Relief Act.

The SCRA provides a wide range of protections for individuals entering or called to active duty in the military, or deployed servicemembers. It is intended to postpone or suspend certain civil obligations to enable service members to devote full attention to duty and relieve stress on the family members of those deployed servicemembers. A few examples of such obligations you may be protected against are:

- outstanding credit card debt
- mortgage payments
- pending trials
- taxes
- terminations of lease.

In addition, the new law:

- Expands current law that protects service members and their families from eviction from housing while on active duty due to nonpayment of rents that are \$1,200 per month or less. Under the new provisions this protection would be significantly updated to meet today's higher cost of living – covering housing leases up to \$2,400 per month – and then be adjusted annually to account for inflation.
- Provides a servicemember who receives permanent change of station

orders or who is deployed to a new location for 90 days or more the right to terminate a housing lease.

- Clarifies and restates existing law that limits to 6 percent interest on credit obligations incurred prior to military service or activation, including credit card debt, for active duty servicemembers. The SCRA unambiguously states that no interest above 6 percent can accrue for credit obligations (*that were established prior to active duty or activation*) while on active duty, nor can that excess interest become due once the servicemember leaves active duty – instead that portion above 6 percent is permanently forgiven. Furthermore, the monthly payment must be reduced by the amount of interest saved during the covered period. **NOTE:** This law only covers debt incurred prior to military service.
- Updates life insurance protections provided to activated Guard and reserve members by increasing from \$10,000 to \$250,000 the maximum policy coverage that the federal government will protect from default for nonpayment while on active duty.
 - Prevents servicemembers from a form of double

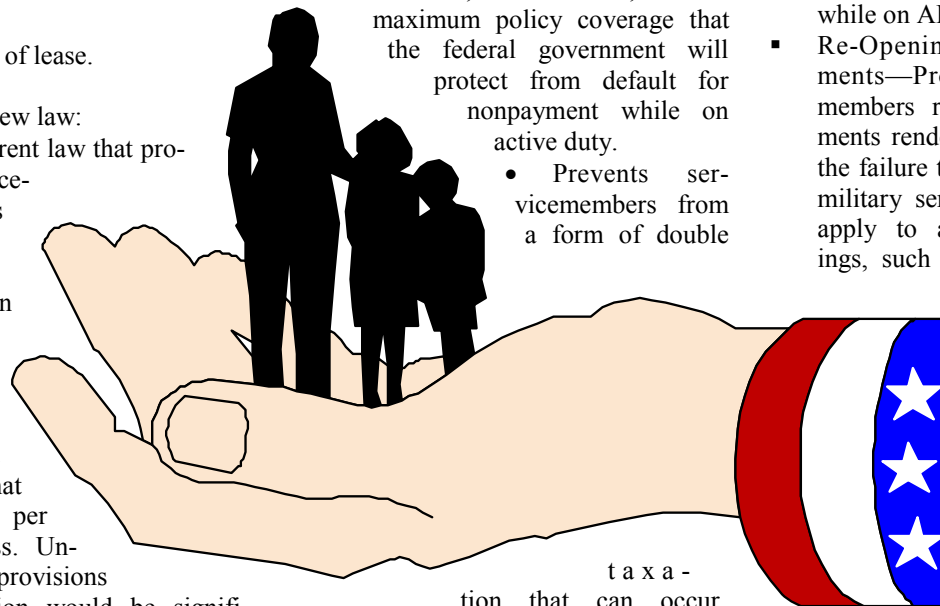
spouse's tax rate when they do not maintain their permanent legal residence in that state.

Other specific highlights include:

- Automobile Leases—Auto lessee who enters 180+ days Active Duty (AD) or already on AD and receives OCONUS (overseas) Permanent Change of Station (PCS) orders or 180+ day deployment orders may terminate automobile leases without early termination penalties.
- Repossession Protection—Prevents personal property (such as automobiles) from being repossessed without a court order.
- Automatic Stay of Court Proceedings—Automatic 90-day stay in civil proceedings (including tax collection proceedings) to 90 days after discharge/release from AD, upon member's (or commander's) written request. Further, if additional stay is subsequently requested but denied, court must appoint counsel to protect member while on AD.
- Re-Opening of Default Judgments—Provides possibility of members reopening default judgments rendered against them when the failure to appear was caused by military service. Protections now apply to administrative proceedings, such as a licensing and zoning matters, which are much more common today.

To read the entire text of the law in detail, outlined by section, visit <http://usmilitary.about.com/library/milinfo/scra/blscramenu.htm>.

Excerpted from <http://www.military.com/Resources/ResourcesContent/0,13964,31042--0,00.html> and the Family Support Bulletin for Families and Friends of 927th Reservists.



taxation that can occur when they have a spouse who works and is taxed in a state other than the state in which they maintain their permanent legal residence. SCRA will prevent states from using the income earned by a servicemember in determining the

Stars & Stripes Offers Free Electronic Newspapers

Servicemembers who do not have access to the Stars and Stripes newspaper but do have access to a computer can now go online to read or download an exact replica of the paper at no charge.

Stars and Stripes officials said the electronic version of the newspaper is an effort to reach readers in remote areas.

Free online versions of the newspaper's European, Pacific and Middle East editions became available April 26.

Tom Kelsch, the newspaper's publisher, said the free online newspaper is geared toward servicemembers in remote locations, but that any servicemember assigned anywhere in the world, as well as family members, can use the service.

"We have many military (people) stationed in places where it just isn't practical to get the printed edition to them, and this is a way to be able to reach (them) wherever in the world they're stationed," Mr. Kelsch said.

Servicemembers and their families

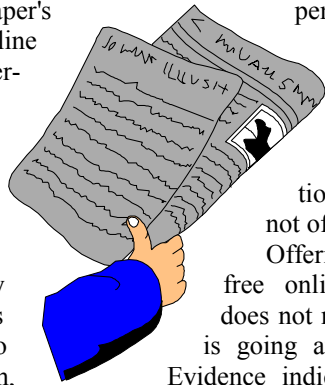
can read the paper online or download it in portable document format at <http://www.estrises.osd.mil>. Officials recommend that readers who want to print the paper and read it that way use the "fit to paper" option when printing. The site also offers free access to past newspapers for seven days.

The electronic newspaper is a cost-effective way to get the Stars and Stripes to servicemembers at bases in isolated places overseas, such as Iceland or Crete, where delivery is expensive, Mr. Kelsch said.

It is also a way for the newspaper to reach servicemembers stateside at bases "where circulation is low or the paper is not offered," he said.

Offering Stars and Stripes free online to servicemembers does not mean the printed edition is going away, Mr. Kelsch said.

Evidence indicates most people still want to hold a newspaper in their hands, and the online version really is most valuable to people who cannot get the paper otherwise, he said.



Printed editions of the paper still will be delivered to servicemembers in places like Afghanistan and Iraq, where computer access is limited, he said. Each day nearly 45,000 copies of the paper are delivered throughout the Middle East region, and plans call for increasing that number, he said. The newspaper delivers about 25,000 copies to Iraq, another 3,500 to Afghanistan and 15,000 to Kuwait, he said.

Mr. Kelsch said the primary reason for the free offer is to help the newspaper fulfill its mission to get the paper out to servicemembers.

"We have a mission to serve, and we intend to serve that mission," he said. "This is a way that we can do it very well, and so we're going to do it."

Last year, Stars and Stripes began offering a paid subscription service for the electronic version of its daily paper. Mr. Kelsch said that few readers subscribed to the electronic edition.

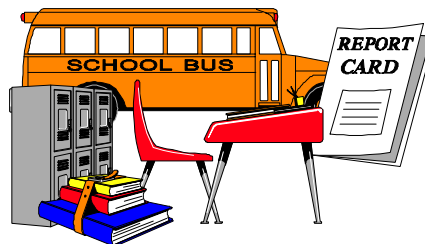
By Army Sgt. 1st Class Doug Sample, American Forces Press Service. From the Air Force Link at <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?storyID=123007608>.

New Legislation Will Assist Transitioning Military Families

Currently, if a military family transitions into the area and is living in temporary lodging but plans to buy a home in a certain school district, the family is charged an out-of-district school tuition fee in order to get their child enrolled in that school until the family becomes an official resident in that district. However, new Illinois legislation—SB2444, which recently passed both the Senate and House unanimously—allows a family 60 days to establish residence, thereby eliminating the out-of-district tuition fee.

Sen. James Clayborne Jr. is the legislator most responsible for this action. He was briefed last June and promised to take action to initiate legislation to keep military-connected families from having to pay out-of-district tuition. Once it is signed into law, this legisla-

tion will make a BIG difference in the lives of many children (and the wallets of many of our military members who have opted to 'do the right thing' for their children by not having them hop from school to school but having to pay \$520 per child).



Synopsis of SB2444 as introduced

Amends the School Code. Provides that if, at the time of enrollment, dependents of United States military per-

sonnel are housed in temporary housing located outside of a school district, but will be living within that school district within 60 days after the time of initial enrollment, the dependents shall be enrolled, upon a sufficient showing of proof, and shall not be charged non-resident tuition. Provides that non-resident dependents of United States military personnel attending school on a tuition-free basis may be counted for the purposes of determining the apportionment of State aid. Effective immediately.

From Dr. Cindy Doil, Scott AFB School Liaison Officer, and the Illinois General Assembly website at <http://www.legis.state.il.us/legislation/billstatus.asp?DocNum=2444&GAID=3&DocTypeID=SB&LegID=8689&SessionID=3>.

Family Child Care Programs

PCS Care is available to everyone that is PCSing to or from Scott AFB. All you need to do is take a copy of your orders to the Family Support Office and they will give you a certificate of eligibility and a list of certified in home providers. You will receive 20 hours of free child care for each child under the age of 12. Family Support will cover all costs. This care can be used to house hunt, job interview, when the packers come, or just to go out to dinner. This care must be used within 60 days of your PCS.

Returning Home Care is available for anyone returning home from being deployed for over a 30 day period. You are eligible for 16 hours of care in our extended duty home on a space available basis. Call the Family Child Care office for more information about this program.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call the Family Child Care Office at 256-8047 or 256-8156, or visit them at building 54. Parent hours are from 7:30-8:30 AM, Monday-Friday.

Circuit Training at the HAWC

Date: Every Thursday

Time: 1:00-3:30 PM

Place: Fitness Center (2nd floor), bldg. P-6

If you need the motivation to excel, and wish to join a group of people with drive and intensity, come out and join us on Thursdays. It's an informal class, so you only need bring yourself and a positive attitude. There's no signing up... just show up. Call the HAWC at 256-7139/7135 for more information. Proper physical and mental health are not far away!



Helpful Websites



Enduring Freedom:

Coping With Trauma and Traumatic Events

http://www.mfrc-dodqol.org/Enduring_Freedom/trauma.htm

Resources are provided to aid military parents and foster parents, professionals (e.g., therapists, counselors), and other advocates (e.g., teachers) who are part of the support system helping youth and their families restore their mental well-being after traumatic events such as terrorist attacks, separations and deployments.

This information was compiled in response to the September 11th Terrorist Attacks at the World Trade Centers, the Pentagon and Western Pennsylvania, however, these sources are applicable for helping military youth and their families during other traumas, such as family sickness and death. The page is organized as follows:

- *Organizations* that support therapists and counselors
- *Tool Kits and Discussion Guides* for parents, foster parents, advocates, therapists and counselors
- *Crisis Intervention Resources* on topics such as travel safety, emergency preparedness, and community service opportunities.

Military Spouse Resource Center

<http://www.milspouse.org/>

The Military Spouse Resource Center is a U.S. Department of Labor sponsored web site designed to assist the spouses of U.S. total force military personnel.

Their mission is to provide easy access to information, resources, and opportunities related to education, training, and employment within the United States.

Expeditionary Family Event Calendar for June 2004

Date	Event & Time	Location	Phone
1	Around the World in Ninety Days (ATWIND) begins	Various Services locations	256-2526
1	Summer Reading Program begins	Base Library	256-5100
11	Give Parents a Break, 1800-2200	Child Development Center & Youth Center	256-8668
13	Summer at Scott "Jazz in June" concert, 1830	Parade Field	229-8134
17	Key Spouse Meeting, 1800	Family Support Center	256-8668
19	Ladies Night Out Tournament	Stars & Strikes Bowling Center	256-4054
19	O'Fallon's Salute to Scott Day	TBD	256-4241
20	Father's Day Brunch	Scott Club	744-1333
24	Center Field Bar-B-Q	Fairview Heights	256-8668

Note: Events in bold are specifically Expeditionary Family Events

This newsletter is a product of the Scott AFB Integrated Delivery System (IDS) Team.

Find more helpful information on our website at <http://public.scott.amc.af.mil/375aw/ids/idscareteam/>.